

What is claimed is:

1. The method of gathering, processing and displaying data describing a patient which comprises, in combination, the steps of:

employing a computer located at the bedside of said patient for accepting identification values which identify said patient and said operator,

employing said computer located at the bedside of said patient for accepting vital sign values from an operator which indicate the patient's current temperature, blood pressure, and pulse rate,

using a communications facility to transmit said vital sign values and said identification values to a remote computer from said computer located at the bedside of said patient to a remote computer,

storing said vital sign values and said identification values in a database,

employing said computer located at the bedside of said patient for transmitting a request for specified data previously stored in said database and for displaying data returned from said database in response to said request.

2. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said computer located at the bedside of said patient includes a touchscreen for accepting said vital sign values from said operator.

3. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said computer located at the bedside of said patient includes a touchscreen for displaying prompting messages which request specific ones of said vital sign values and for accepting said vital sign values from said operator.

4. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein computer located at said bedside includes a connected barcode scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed medium.

5. The method set forth in claim 2 wherein computer located at said bedside includes a connected barcode scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed medium.

1 6. The method set forth in claim 3 wherein computer located at said bedside includes a
2 connected barcode scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed medium.

1 7. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said computer located at said bedside
2 comprises a handheld computer and said communications facility includes a radio
3 communications link which transmits data between said handheld computer and said remote
4 computer.

1 8. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said computer located at said bedside
2 comprises a handheld computer and said communications facility includes a radio
3 communications link which transmits data between said handheld computer and said remote
4 computer.

1 9. The method set forth in claim 3 wherein said computer located at said bedside
2 comprises a handheld computer and said communications facility includes a radio
3 communications link which transmits data between said handheld computer and said remote
4 computer.

1 10. The method set forth in claim 9 wherein said handheld computer located at said
2 bedside employs a barcode scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed
3 medium.

1 11. The method set forth in claim 3 wherein said touch screen display a plurality of
2 touch controls each of which increments or decrements the current value of said specific ones of
3 said vital sign values.

1 12. In combination with a database server computer for storing patient data, a bedside
2 computer for gathering, processing and displaying data describing a patient at the bedside of
3 said patient and remote from said database server, said bedside computer patient comprising:

4 means for accepting identification values that identify said patient and an
5 operator,
6 means for accepting vital sign values from said operator which indicate the
7 patient's current temperature, blood pressure, and pulse rate,
8 a communications interface for transmitting said vital sign values and said
9 identification values to said database computer for storage and for transmitting a request
10 for specified data previously stored bu said database computer, and
11 means for displaying data returned from said database computer in response to
12 said request.

1 13. The bedside computer set forth in claim 12 wherein said means for accepting vital
2 sign values includes a touchscreen for accepting input commands from said operator.

3 14. The bedside computer set forth in claim 12 wherein said means for accepting vital
4 sign values includes a touchscreen for displaying prompting messages which request specific
5 ones of said vital sign values and for accepting said vital sign values from said operator.

6 15. The bedside computer set forth in claim 12 wherein said means for accepting
7 identification values that identify said patient and an operator include a connected barcode
8 scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed medium.

9 16. The bedside computer set forth in claim 13 wherein said means for accepting
10 identification values that identify said patient and an operator include a connected barcode
11 scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed medium.

12 15. The bedside computer set forth in claim 14 wherein said means for accepting
13 identification values that identify said patient and an operator include a connected barcode
14 scanner for accepting said identification values from a printed medium.

1 16. The method set forth in claim 12 wherein said bedside computer comprises a
2 handheld computer and said communications facility includes a radio communications link
3 which transmits data between said handheld computer and said remote computer.

17. The method set forth in claim 15 wherein said bedside computer comprises a
handheld computer and said communications facility includes a radio communications link
which transmits data between said handheld computer and said remote computer.